

THE LADY'S GEOGRAPHY.

[Kelly Plante](#) August 25, 2021

DESCRIPTION of the Island of CEYLON. CONCLUDED.

THERE are in this island a very particular kind of blackish leaches, which lurk under the grass, and are extremely troublesome to foot travellers. They are at first not thicker than a horse hair; but grow to be of the bulk of a goose's quill, and two or three inches in length. They are only to be seen in the rainy seasons, at which times crawling up the legs of those who walk barefoot, as is the custom of that country, they sting them, and suck their blood with so much quickness, that it is impossible to get rid of them before they have effected their purpose. This might seem incredible, were it not for the prodigious multitudes in which they make their attacks, which consequently renders a considerable time necessary to oblige them to quit their hold.

As the island is very full of woods and lakes, it is natural to imagine that it must also be very amply stored with birds and fishes. Among the former are great plenty of green perroquets; but of a kind that cannot be taught to speak. They have two other sorts of birds, however, which learn very easily; they are about the size of a black-bird, and are called by the natives by the names of mal-couda and cau-

couda: the first is black, and the other of a bright gold colour.

As to fish, their lakes and rivers are extremely full of them, particularly of salmon; but the inhabitants seem to set no great value on them.

Serpents of many kinds, both venemous and inoffensive, are found in this island: amongst which the most remarkable are, 1st. the pimberah, which is as thick as a man's body, feeds mostly on deer, and other animals of a like kind; and it is said, will swallow a kid whole, whose horns will sometimes pierce through his belly, and kill him. 2d. the polonga, which is about five or six feet long, and extremely venemous. And 3d. the noya, which is a greyish snake, not above four feet long, and is marked on its head with the appearance of a pair of spectacles. He is a mortal enemy to the polonga, and whenever they meet the battle constantly terminates in the death of one or the other of them. He is, however, very harmless, on which account the Indians call him noya rodgerah, or the royal snake.

There is a kind of venemous lizard in this country which they name hiekanella, and which harbours in the eaves and thatchings of the houses, but will not attack a man unless provoked. But the most formidable creature belonging to this island is a prodigious large black hairy spider, which they call democulo. Its body is as large as one's fist, and its legs proportionable. Nothing can be more mocking than its bite,

which is not immediately mortal, but affects the senses, and occasions madness. As to the men, they find assistance in this case from certain herbs and barks, when applied to in time; but the cattle are frequently bit or stung by these monstrous creatures, and die without any remedy having been yet discovered to preserve them.

As to the mineral kingdom, this country produces many kinds of gems, and in great quantity, particularly sapphires, rubies, and cat's eyes; but these are all secured for the king's use. They have besides both iron and lead mines; but these, as well as many other valuable productions of the island, are considered of little worth compared to the cinnamon and wild honey; which, are, properly speaking, the peculiar traffick of the country, and of which the Dutch have made an amazing advantage since their conquest of it.

Having thus got through the description of the island of Ceylon, and mentioned the most extraordinary particulars of curiosity in it, we shall now take leave of our readers, recommending to their perusal the farther accounts given by the travellers who have visited it, and who seem all to unite in opinion as to its being one of the finest, most amply stored, and most amazingly diversified spot throughout the whole extent of the East Indies.

FINIS.